

For the organization of an international movement of workers and young people against war!

Young Guard of the Bolshevik-Leninists in Russia
12 October 2022

This statement was submitted by the Young Guard of the Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), an organization in Russia that has declared its political support for the International Committee of the Fourth International. Representatives of the YGBL participated in a meeting of the ICFI and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality on October 9 to discuss the building of a movement of young people against war.

1. The Young Guard Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL) openly declares its solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the International Youth and Students for Socialist Equality (IYSSE) in the organization of an international youth movement against the war between Russia and the US-NATO over Ukraine.

2. As proof of this solidarity, the YGBL representatives participated in the international meeting of the ICFI and IYSSE against the war held on October 9. At this meeting, the YGBL expressed its political support for the ICFI and IYSSE. The representatives of the YGBL also voted to take steps to establish an international anti-war youth movement as part of the struggle for a socialist perspective.

3. The world capitalist system is now in an acute crisis, which ultimately determines the reactionary policies of the capitalist countries and the dynamics of the class struggle in society. The whole capitalist system is bursting at the seams because of the unresolved problems of the 20th century: above all, the contradictions between the social character of production and the private-capitalist form of appropriation, and between the globalized economy and the division of the world into nation-states. The exacerbation of these contradictions leads capitalist countries to reactionary, chauvinistic and militaristic policies. The United States, faced with an acute crisis, seeks to redivide the world on new terms.

4. The new world order that the United States wants to establish looks like this very possible picture: Russia and China are to be subordinated to imperialism and divided, if that is necessary to maintain direct control over their natural, industrial-technological and human resources.

5. The European imperialist powers support the United States for their own place in the new redivision of the world. At the same time, European imperialism, while placed on rations by the United States, sees a way out of its economic and geopolitical predicament only in a redivision of the world in which it can regain its former greatness.

6. Japan, South Korea and Australia support the US only as much as it suits their interests in the struggle against China in the Pacific region. These countries will support the US as long as it allows them to compete with China. The process of dividing spheres of influence will revive the contradictions between the Pacific capitalist powers, which are as much in limbo as Europe.

7. The crisis of 2008 revived class struggles around the world. The Arab Spring of the early 2010s is vivid evidence of this revival. It forced US and European imperialism to take more decisive measures. In 2014, they

supported a coup d'état in Ukraine. Through this coup, the US was able to create all the conditions to build a bridgehead in a future war against Russia.

8. The Covid-19 pandemic that erupted in 2020 exacerbated the contradictions of capitalism and was the trigger for a more rapid expansion of US imperialism in preparation for war against Russia and China. The US embarked on a more provocative path of abandoning the "one-China" policy, and increasing its support for Ukraine, as expressed in the NATO summit in August 2021, which supported Zelensky's "Crimean platform."

9. The reactionary regime of Vladimir Putin emerged from the treacherous dissolution of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy and the restoration of capitalism. The policies of Putin, in the final analysis, are aimed at safeguarding the wealth of the post-Soviet oligarchy against the pressure of Western imperialism from above and, even more critically, against the movement of the Russian working class from below.

10. Within this geopolitical and social context, Putin's adventurist invasion of Ukraine on February 24 was the Russian oligarchy's response to NATO's relentless expansion to the east. The Putin regime's main objective was to achieve through the pressure of its "Special Operation" a new round of talks with the US-NATO, since the last round ended up crossing "red lines" on the part of the US-NATO, which caused Putin's invasion.

11. The Russian bourgeoisie's desire for an "equal partnership" with the West was one of the most utopian delusions. This delusion, historically derived from Stalin's policy of "Popular Fronts" and then "peaceful coexistence," developed among the fledgling class of Russian capitalists in the 1990s.

12. The Putin regime has not gotten rid of this utopian delusion. Its whole policy has been to maneuver and seek compromise with the West, with whom the Russian oligarchy wanted to be "on equal footing." Except that Western imperialism, with its conquering ambitions for Russia, did not care about these conciliatory tones of Putin's regime.

13. For the Ukrainian oligarchy, with its frankly comprador nature, it was profitable to promote dreams of an independent "democratic" Ukraine with its self-determination. However, this utopia was quickly shattered against the wall of reality represented by the system of world imperialism, where it became the instrument of Western capital in its imperialist ambitions against Russia.

14. Ukraine's independence ended before it had even begun, as did Russia's utopian dreams of an "equal" dialogue with the West. Both countries, which suffered from the disastrous collapse of the Soviet Union, faced a grim reality. Neither had the possibility of realizing in practice their reactionary goals.

15. Capitalist Russia remained independent only to the extent that it still

possessed the Soviet legacy: military bases in the former Soviet republics, a vast arsenal of nuclear weapons and a wealth of raw materials. The Russian oligarchy quickly acquired a dual position: as a raw materials appendage, it wanted to independently manage and control the transfer of raw materials and profits from them.

16. Ukraine's dreams of real independence are a mirage within the current capitalist system. The only real solution to the Ukrainian question can be a world socialist revolution. And this does not only apply to the Ukrainian question. Any local question can only ultimately be resolved on the world stage, that is, in a global way.

17. The course of the war after Putin's invasion of Ukraine increasingly emphasizes the reactionary nature of this invasion. While claiming to be fighting for the independence of the Russian people from the threat of Western imperialism, Putin is in fact only defending the independence of the Russian oligarchy to exploit the Russian working class and the country's raw material wealth.

18. The recent defeats of September and October underscore that the Putin regime has no way out of the current crisis for Russian society. It will not have such a way out in the future. All of the military and political activities of the Putin regime will only contribute to the escalation of Western imperialism and the deterioration of conditions for the Russian, Ukrainian and international working class.

19. The prospects for the present war, when thought within the framework of the capitalist system, are very bleak. First, this war will take on a long-term character and will not only be fought between Ukraine and Russia. It is the first step in inflaming the world situation to the point that the threat of a third world war is simply inevitable. All countries of the world will take part in the future war.

20. Secondly, the nature of the war will be determined by the policies of the ruling classes, which now stand on a blatantly anti-human position. The ruling classes are recklessly moving toward the use of nuclear weapons in the conflict, thereby creating the real possibility of a nuclear Armageddon. The specter of planetary destruction arises from the insane policies of imperialist and capitalist governments. The recklessness of the ruling capitalist elite compels young people to ask whether they will be allowed any future at all.

21. However, humanity is not inescapably doomed to destruction. The YGBL rejects the fatalism of the pessimists, whose outlook is trapped within the confines of what is possible within this existing world capitalist order. We insist that there is also an optimistic option, based on a socialist perspective, which can be realized in the context of a mass political struggle of the international working class. The world consists not only of imperialists and oligarchs. There is also a massive working class, whose collective labor, in all its diverse, complex and infinitely creative forms, is the driving force of human progress.

22. The international working class is the only revolutionary force in society capable of resolving the crisis of capitalism, dealing with poverty, inequality, war, disease and climate change. This revolutionary character is embedded in the social and economic conditions of the working class, in the historical development of its struggle against class oppression.

23. Therefore, the struggle against Western imperialism and other capitalist countries, including Putin's regime, must be based on a broad mobilization of the working class as part of the struggle to transform capitalist society into communist society. This poses the challenge of building a real, not imaginary, revolutionary leadership in the working class. Only through such a leadership can the political consciousness of the working class be raised to the level of achieving the socialist revolution and taking state power all over the world.

24. The greatest crisis of our time for the working class is the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Revolutionary leadership is the main missing puzzle in the successful struggle against the bourgeoisie. This factor, which is subjective in nature, must be the last step for the successful

spread and consolidation of socialist revolution throughout the world.

25. A real revolutionary leadership of the working class can only be that organization which has systematically processed all the past historical experience of Marxism and the workers' movement. The revolutionary strategy and tactics of proletarian leadership in the modern world will precisely take shape on the basis of the assimilation of this experience as well as of objective conditions.

26. The International Committee of the Fourth International is the only international organization capable of resolving the crisis of revolutionary leadership in the working class. The ICFI exists as the only legitimate successor to the Fourth International and to Leon Trotsky. It is even more correct to say that the ICFI is the Fourth International.

27. The orientation of the YGBL toward Trotskyism is not a mere whim of a number of individuals sympathetic to Trotsky. It is based on the fact that Trotskyism is the only legitimate heir to Marxism, that it is Trotskyism that represents the independent line of the proletariat in its struggle for socialism, that Trotskyism is the Marxism of the 21st century. Only on the foundation of Trotskyism is the realization of the world revolution possible.

28. Trotsky's heroic struggle against the reactionary nationalist bureaucratic regime led by Stalin—whose name will forever live in infamy as the gravedigger of the Bolshevik Party and the October Revolution—has been vindicated by history. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 confirmed his warning that the Stalinists regime, unless overthrown by the working class, would lead to the destruction of the Soviet Union.

29. Moreover, Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution provided a scientific analysis of the political dynamics of the international class struggle in an epoch that he so profoundly described as the "death agony of capitalism." Only an understanding of reality in the Marxist vein, of which Trotskyism is the true expression, will help the proletariat to realize its position.

30. The International Youth and Students for Socialist Equality is the youth wing of the ICFI. The main task of this movement is to ensure a connection between youth and the working class in their common struggle for socialism. For young people, because of the likely onset of World War III, the question of their future is now more important than ever.

31. If young people want a better future for themselves, they must fight for it. The struggle for the future inevitably becomes a struggle against capitalism, which leads the youth to a socialist perspective. However, the struggle of the youth must not be isolated, the youth must realize that their main ally in the struggle for the future is the working class.

32. The *raison d'être* of the IYSSE is to organize and coordinate youth internationally, which is impossible without explaining to youth the most important theoretical and historical questions of relevance to the present state of affairs. The youth movement is an important part of the independent labor movement against imperialism and war.

33. The current tasks of the YGBL are based on a clear understanding that there is a modest knowledge in Russia and other former Soviet republics of the ICFI and IYSSE, of the activities that these organizations are engaged in in other countries. Therefore, the YGBL will seek to expand the influence of the ICFI and IYSSE on the consciousness of the masses in the former Soviet Union.

34. If you stand in solidarity with the statement of the YGBL, join us in our struggle to build sections of the ICFI and IYSSE in Russia, Ukraine and other former Soviet republics. Building sections of the ICFI and IYSSE will be an essential step toward resolving the crisis of revolutionary leadership and bringing about a socialist revolution throughout the world.



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